The
Richmond ReView

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Author Has Dual Career

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Now you see it ...

Photo: Philip Libono Gang

Magician Den Sneider entertains children from the Claire Lilienthal Alternative School and the Merin Dey School's after-school program with a magic show Jan. 28. The show was held at the Presidio Branch Reading Center at 3150 Sacramento St.

Extortions of local merchants blamed on gangs

by Chris Rivers

Police have arrested one of three suspects in connection with a series of Asian gang-related robberies and extortions that began Jan. 14 in the Richmond and Sunset districts and escalated through the Chinese New Year.

Four similar restaurant robberies occurred during the crime spree including the Mandalay Restaurant at 4348 Geary Blvd., the Ton Kiang Restaurant at 3148 Geary Blvd. and a restaurant at 5173 Mission St.

A 20-year-old Chinese male, whose name was withheld by police pending further arrests, was apprehended after he allegedly robbed a restaurant at 1559 Franklin St. Jan. 18.

As of press-time, a second suspect was identified and wanted on $250,000 bail, with a possible third unidentified suspect still at large.

Three Vietnamese males, whose identities were also not released by police, were arrested the same day in connection with the attempted extortion of $30,000 from a Sunset District construction company and another extortion attempt to get $15,000 on a bad debt in the Richmond District.

Lieutenant Michael Dower of the San Francisco Police Department's Gang Task Force said the suspects were arrested the same day of the two extortion attempts. Police set up a trap at the drop-off point where the intended victim had agreed to hand over the money to the suspects.

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GGNRA hopes to acquire Public Health Hospital

by Paul Kozakiewicz

The Public Health Hospital site at Lake Street and 15th Avenue is being included in plans to convert the Presidio Army Post into a national park.

The park service will have the opportunity to claim the property when the Army turns the 1,441-acre post over to the Department of the Interior for inclusion into the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). The status of the public health hospital was in question because it was not specifically included in the act creating the GGNRA.

The 36.5 acre plot, which includes a six-story hospital and about 16 other structures, including some of "historical significance," is being included in the park service's proposed plan for the Presidio when the park service takes over.

According to Howard Levitt, chief of public affairs with the GGNRA, possible uses for the Public Health Hospital will be recommended in a draft report due out in April. After the release, he said, there will be an opportunity for public comment, which will be taken into consideration before deciding what final plans to propose for the property.

"There will be several formal hearings as well as some less formal workshops and briefings," Levitt said. He said he could not divulge specific plans, because they were still being worked on, but would be in contact with neighborhood groups, such as the Planning Association for the Richmond, when the draft is released.

The public health hospital property was originally going to be sold according to the guidelines of the Base Closure Act, which Congress passed to save money by closing obsolete military bases.

But the Sierra Club threatened to sue, saying the property belonged with the rest of the Presidio, which under the terms of the 1972 GGNRA law, is to be automatically turned into a national recreation area.

Homer Perkins, public affairs specialist with the Army Corp of Engineers, says the public health hospital property will be offered to the park service, through the Bureau of Land Management. However, he says the U.S. Department of Defense will have the "first crack" at using the property.

Levitt said the exact procedure by which the hospital grounds will become park service lands is unclear.

Michael Alexander, chair of the Sierra Club's Presidio Task Force, was happy with the Army's decision not to try to sell the property, saying the health hospital lands are part of the "historic Presidio" and should be part of the GGNRA.

"We're delighted that the

Continued on back page

Doyle Drive, Presidio discussed at local forum

by Barbara Austen

Proposed design plans for Doyle Drive and the Presidio Army Post conversion were the main topics, along with an update on the crime scene, at the Richmond District Community/Police Forum Jan. 19 at the Richmond District Police Station.

Paul Epstein, a member of the Doyle Drive Task Force, began the discussion by describing Doyle Drive, the drive that connects the Richmond and the Marina districts to the Golden Gate Bridge, as "unsafe" and "falling down." According to Epstein, who is also a member of the Planning Association for the Richmond, the drive, which was built before the Golden Gate Bridge, is not up to modern standards and will not last beyond 10 years.

Epstein said that the task force, which consists of people from the police department, California Highway Patrol and the Golden Gate Bridge District, identified several issues concerning the drive before recommending a new design to the public and Caltrans, who will make the final decision for the roadway.

The task force was concerned about residents in the Richmond and Marina being frustrated by the heavy traffic and the gridlock during commute hours and on weekends. Also, conservationists do not want to drive to take up too much park land.

The task force wanted something modern and visually pleasing, according to Epstein, and decided on a design by Michael Painter, a landscape architect. He proposes that the future Doyle Drive have depressed roadways passing underground and that it be moved closer to the Presidio, giving the Exploratorium in the Palace of Fine Arts a larger area.

"The roadway being depressed in parts would give oew vistas of the bay," said Epstein.

He is particularly concerned with the road-

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Residents join to find solutions

Grant finances study of changing neighborhood

by Barbara Austen

The Richmond District, with eight other City neighborhoods, has been labeled a transitional neighborhood by the Neighborhoods In Transition Group – a Multicultural Partnership (NIT-AMP).

As transitional neighborhoods, these districts are experiencing economic, ethnic, and educational changes in their population.

This type of situation is what makes transitional neighborhoods unique and possibly prone to conflicts. For example, an influx of different Asian groups can affect other ethnic groups resulting in "turf" battles according to Beatrice Lee, director of NIT-AMP.

The group is hoping to assist transitional neighborhoods by mobilizing the residents of each neighborhood to identify problems in their communities and to work toward solving them.

"We want the neighborhood's assessment of the problems such as unemployment and school drop-out rates," said Lee.

"We have a cultural focus," she added.

According the Marci Brown, communications specialist for NIT-AMP, the neighborhoods identified are the Richmond and Sunset districts, the Bernal Heights, Diamond Heights/Glen Park, Haight Ashbury, Hayes Valley, Japantown, North Beach, and South of Market are often overlooked by City services when it comes to neighborhood problems.

"They don't have the high visibility that disenfranchised neighborhoods have because they have pockets of both affluence and poverty," said Brown.

Each neighborhood has a community organizer at a participating local host organization to coordinate the project's efforts. Jingling Beeson, of the Richmond Area Multi-Services (RAMS), will direct the group's plans in the Richmond District.

After inviting Richmond residents from various community organizations such as churches, the police department and service organizations to a meeting in mid-January, Beeson introduced NIT-AMP and asked residents to join a coalition to identify the issues specific to the District.

Organizations such as the Russian American Community Services, the Richmond Hills Manor Family Center, the Richmond District Neighborhood Center, the YMCA and others responded.

"We would like to encourage all residents to join," said Beeson, who would like to see more merchants participate in the coalition.

She also often goes out to community meetings to talk about the NIT-AMP program.

Coalition members will dedicate at least two hours a month to attend a meeting and participate in focus groups and will also take time to distribute questionnaires focusing on substance abuse and prevention in the District. Eventually they will also help implement their proposed solutions to the Richmond's issues.

"We want them (the coalition) to have total involvement in the process," commented Beeson.

This fall, when the nine transitional neighborhoods have their data collected from surveys and focus groups, the individual coalitions will present their findings to NIT-AMP. They will then work with City department heads in coordinating citywide services to be sensitive to the neighborhoods' needs, especially culturally.

"The City departments don't have detailed documentation on needs. We want to improve the coordination of services and to have the City look at these services from a neighborhood's perspective," Lee said.

She would like to see City information printed in different languages such as Russian and the different Asian languages, so that residents of all backgrounds will be able to make the best use of services available from the City.

The Richmond coalition's next meeting is Feb. 10, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the RAMS office at 3626 Balboa St. At the meeting the coalition will discuss when and where to distribute surveys asking about neighborhood issues.

NIT-AMP is administered by the Mayor's Criminal Justice Council and funded by a four-year, $4 million grant from the Federal Office for Substance Abuse Prevention. The Japanese Community Youth Council acts as the fiscal office for the group.

"Our whole purpose is to empower the community," said Brown.

To join the Richmond's coalition of NIT-AMP, or to pick up a questionnaire, call Beeson at 953-5955.

Police force to 'beef up' with matrix staffing plan

The Richmond District will have more police officers on the street this month as the District starts a system of "matrix enforcement."

According to District police Captain Tom Suttmeier, the District's police force will be augmented with about 14 additional officers from throughout the City to attack some of the problem areas of law enforcement.

He said the extra officers will be used to enforce traffic laws in the District, particularly on Park Presidio Boulevard where there about 140 accidents last year. The officers will also be used to "beef up" commercial burglary details and for fighting suspects plying the narcotics trade.

Suttmeier said be also added several officers to the graveyard shift for a greater police presence during the early morning hours when some crime, including burglaries and automobile break-ins, occurs. But he said the Richmond's complemeot of 64 officers is thin for covering shifts and "there's not much slack," to cover for vacatioos and sick time.

Sixty officers were the considered minimal staffing level for the District before police district boundaries were changed in August 1991. An additional four officers were proposed to bring the minimum staffing levels in the District to 64, where they currently are.

"I would be happy, at this point, to get one or two officers," Suttmeier said.

San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan has proposed hiring up to an additional 200 police officers in this year's budget, 50 through a police academy class and bopes to get the rest, already trained, from other law enforcement agencies.

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Seniors 60 years or older are invited to enjoy a hot lunch every weekday, at noon, at locations in the Richmond and Sunset districts.

The Jewish Community Center prepares delicious entrecs including turkey chow mein, roasted chicken, corned beef and cabbage, fresh fish and other healthy meals. All seniors are welcome.

Donation for the hot lunch is $1.25. To find out where senior lunches are served, call Florence Edelman at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco at 346-6040.

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Cancer center construction begins at Presidio Heights

by Paul Kozakiewicz

Photo: Philip Liboron Gangi

Workers for Malcolm Drilling start doing shoring the walls of the site of the California Pacific Medical Center's cancer center.

Construction started in January to build an underground cancer center in the Presidio Heights neighborhood.

The California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC) has commenced with plans to build the 9,970-square-foot center under a parking lot at its East Campus (formerly the Marshal Hale Hospital) at the comer of Sacramento and Maple streets.

The Herrero Brothers construction company is overseeing the $20 million core phase of the project, which will include shoring and excavation, construction of the concrete structure and landscaping.

The final phase will cost $7.5 million and will include the finishing touches, including the purchase of one linear accelerator.

The center will have four vaults with 4.5-foot thick walls which will be used to house three linear accelerators, which shoot electron beams that kill cancer cells in patients.

The medical center already has two accelerators and with the new one they will have three at the new center, according to Libby Fox, CPMC's news and information manager.

The 70 parking spaces lost during the expected one-and-a-half years of construction are being compensated for by the medical center's other parking lot and its parking garage, she said.

The frequent rains in January, Fox added, delayed the project for about two weeks but that July 1994 is still the estimated date for completion, with about six more months needed for "fine tuning."

The cancer center project was derailed for eight months while some neighborhood residents appealed San Francisco Zoning Administrator Bob Passmore's decision to exempt the center from the conditional permit process and from environmental review.

Passmore said the medical center would be exempt from planning department review because the scope of work planned for the cancer center did not "constitute a significant alteration, enlargement or intensification" of the facility's use.

The Marshall Hale Hospital first opened a cancer center at the site in 1952.

The residents said they were surprised when they learned that construction would begin at the Sacramento Street site within a month.

They claimed they were not notified and did not "have their day in court" to express concerns and to have questions of safety answered, particularly about the safety of the linear accelerators if an earthquake struck.

The San Francisco Board of Permit Appeals subsequently rejected requests from about a dozen neighborhood residents and upheld the zoning administrator's decision.

Additionally, a shoring permit necessary to begin construction, which had been suspended by the Bureau of Building Inspection, was reinstituted when missing plans for the project were filed with the planning department.

Richmond Democrats host supervisor

by John Dunbar

Newly elected San Francisco Supervisor Sue Bierman addressed a range of questions and issues posed by members of the Richmond District Democratic Club at their Jan. 21 meeting.

Local resident Priscilla Eshelman asked Bierman's office to look into possible building code violations at an affordable housing complex on LaPlaya, which is a home for many Russian emigrés.

Eshelman reported that the building has exposed electrical wiring, holes in the ceilings and leaks in apartments.

Bierman, a former Planning Commissioner, promised to investigate the matter.

Bierman also fielded questions about Muni service. She offered advice to residents who asked how to improve Muni service and get a better response to their concerns from City Hall.

She added that she encountered skepticism on the campaign trail about improving Muni, but feels it is an important San Francisco concern.

Bierman also spoke of her interest in seeing San Francisco return to a form of district elections. She argued that campaigns for the S.F. Board of Supervisors would then cost less, voters would have greater access to candidates to the board and that such a system of elections would reduce the influence that developers and downtown interests exert on City Hall.

One local resident noted that, "Unlike most politicians (Bierman) is remarkably direct and genuine."

The Richmond District Democratic club will hold a community roundtable with San Francisco Police Captain Tom Suttmeier of the Richmond Station on Feb. 18 at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting will be held in the Community Room of the Richmond police station, at 461 Sixth Ave., between Geary Boulevard and Anza Street.

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Golden Gate Park Master Plan – 2 years in the making

by Shawna McCoy

Traffic, not on freeways, but in Golden Gate Park, is the most mentioned issue to the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, which is in the beginning stages of forming a new Golden Gate Park Master Plan.

According to park authorities, the process to amend the rule book for San Francisco's most popular park, will take approximately two years of discussion and meetings.

Identifying and reviewing questions that are pertinent to the park and to its future, like traffic, landscaping, security, and homelessness is one of the first tasks.

For the past five months the Golden Gate Park Master Plan Task Force has reviewed comments from various agencies and the park community forming a report of draft park issues.

"Hopefully we'll reach a consensus in an orderly process but there's going to be a lot of unrest, a lot of discussion, and a lot of review of the issues," said Deborah Learner, project planner at the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department.

"Only after all the discussion will we have a preferred plan."

The original master plan, called "Objectives and Policies, the Plan for Golden Gate Park" was adopted with a similar process in 1979 and is used as a basis for the current discussion. It states five objectives with policies that deal with landscape, open space, roadways, cultural and recreational aspects of the park.

But times have changed. The in-line skating trend has caused conflicts with bicyclists and pedestrians who see a need for more paths. Some skaters want to see JFK Drive repaved for better skating.

Traffic and circulation has been a bone of contention for the park since the days of the speeding buggy and has since been compounded by the automobile a bigger, faster mode of transportation. Both have an impact on a wide range of issues.

According to the report, bumper-to-bumper parking and overcrowded roads are the most visible of the park's problems. If there are so many cars, does the park fill its mission as "a series of sylvan and pastoral views, calculated to banish all thoughts of urban objects ...," as described by its designer, William Hammond Hall?

Traffic and parking tie-ups caused by large events in surrounding neighborhoods are also an issue. Parking on paved roads within the park cause some to question whether some roads should be widened. There is also the environmental impact caused by carbon monoxide emission.

A letter from the Haight/Ashbury Neighborhood Council in response to a call for recommendations from the Department of Rec and Park suggests that no new roadways be built in the park and lists nine roadways that could be removed to create more parkland.

The essence of Golden Gate Park as a park is also a topic of debate, particularly regarding land use. There are questions whether places like the Richmond Sunset Water Pollution Control Plant, which will be phased out when a new plant opens in 1994, and a recycling center, belong in a park.

"We need a document that says this is what the park looks like and this is what it needs to look like," Stephen Shotland, open space planner for the San Francisco Department of City Planning, states.

Letters received by the Park and Recreation Department came from the Audubon Society, the California Academy of Sciences, and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, all contributing suggestions for the new master plan.

The California Academy of Sciences, Steinhart Aquarium, suggests that adequate directional signs should be specified in the plan, as well as the need to be allowed to do internal construction on existing buildings.

Executive Director Roy Eisenhardt says there should be a multiple use aspect for the Master Plan including a wide range of issues, like: cultural issues (museums and gardens) open space, and access for people with disabilities.

After considering all issues brought by various agencies and the community, the task force will investigate the draft policy, and conduct on-site studies to test the feasibility of suggestions.

The next step will be to write a draft master plan that will again be reviewed, through public process, before it is put into effect for the next 10 years.

Other issues mentioned in the report are:

• Should weekend and park closures be extended to other days and areas, modified or eliminated?

• Consideration of north-south pedestrian routes through the park, separating pedestrians from other circulation modes, and investigation of improved mapping and signing for pedestrian facilities.

• Adequate staffing and resources to properly maintain the park landscape and protection of the landscape from abuse by activities in the park.

• Should user fees be charged for certain facilities in Golden Gate Park and would such fees keep low-income visitors out?

• Should the park be a living place for the homeless?

• Are concessions appropriate within the park or should they be located in the surrounding neighborhoods? What kind of food should be served?

• The ability to enforce dog regulations.

The next community meeting is scheduled for Feb. 5 at 7 p.m. at the County Fair Building in Golden Gate Park. Public involvement in the process and comments are encouraged.

For more information contract Deborah Learner at 666-7087.

YMCA sets $55,000 as goal for its 1993 drive

The Richmond District YMCA has embarked on its annual crusade – to raise money to support its community programs.

According to Beth Salazar, director of the Y on 18th Avenue, the goal is to raise $55,000 to help serve the 2,000 children and adults the District Y provides with childcare, youth and family camping, employment training and health and fitness programs.

During the fund-raising drive, local community and business leaders will join the YMCA's numerous volunteers to help achieve the financial goals by the March 17 deadline.

All donations to the nonprofit District YMCA, located at 360 18th Ave., are tax-deductible and payments can be made quarterly.

The group has had operations in the Richmond District for the past 71 years.

For more information about programs or to make a donation, call the Y at 668-2060.

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Richmond recreation center plans OK'd by committee

by Mick Ostermann

Richmond District residents are one step closer to getting a new recreation center in 1995.

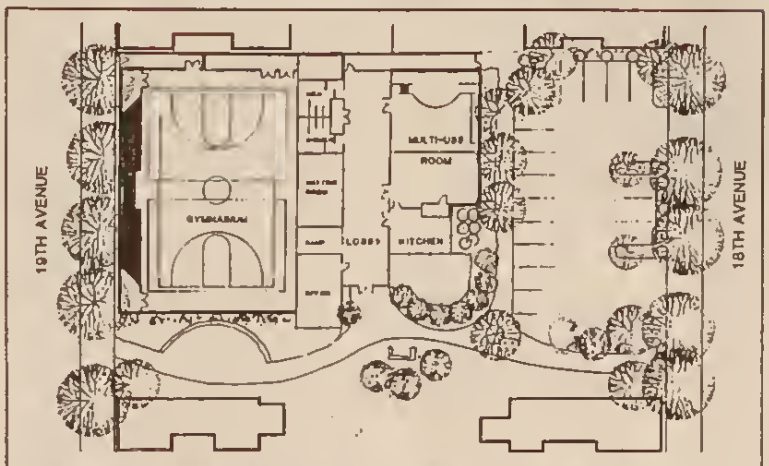
The plans for the center, which will be located at the old Sutro Annex lot on 18th Avenue between California and Clement streets, were approved by the SF Recreation and Parks and Planning Committee Jan. 5.

Of the three designs proposed for the center drawn up by Marquis Associates, alternative number three was chosen.

According to Chuck Lantz, who used to live on 18th Avenue, "the third alternative was chosen because it bas the most open space of the three plans and the neighbors had concerns about blocking lights and shadows. It also maximizes parking, which was a major concern."

The center will consist of multi-use facilities, including a gymnasium, performing stage and kitchen, athletic facilities, offices, storage, and parking lot, with the outside terraced and landscaped.

Funding for the center comes from the City Open Space Program and approximately $2.5 million of the estimated $4 million needed for completion has been gathered to date.



The SF Recreation and Perk Commission likes alternative 3 as the plans to become the new Richmond recreation center.

If all goes well, construction sbould be starting about the spring of 1994, according to Tim Lillyquist, project manager.

"If all the money is allocated this year, we should be ready to start next year. We are hoping to complete construction by spring of 1995," he said.

During a public meeting on July 8, 1992, to discuss the design of the new recreation center, one main concern within the community revolved around accessible parking.

That same potential parking problem was the reason neighbors formed the Sutro Annex Association, which successfully blocked proposed condominiums on the site in 1987.

"I think the neighbors would cry 'bloody murder' if even one of those spaces is taken away," Lantz said.

Now, however, he seems confident that the community is happy with the plans for the new center.

"There is a tremendous problem with parking in the area, and it has gotten worse over the last five years," he said, adding that people in the neighborhood are willing to work together to get community resource.

Richmond District resident being sought in thefts of mail from postal relay boxes

by Ann Lytle

A Richmond District man has been identified in connection with the break-in and mail theft of six postal relay boxes throughout San Francisco.

Postal inspectors were granted warrants on Dec. 5 and 18 to search the man's car and apartment, where they found four boxes of blank personal checks addressed to other San Francisco residents and a magazine addressed to another resident.

A neighbor of the same man reponed finding two sacks of mail in his garbage can and six sacks of mail were found in Golden Gate Park.

The suspect has not yet been arrested and police were withholding his identification as of presstime.

The Sunset District has been the hardest hit of all San Francisco neighborhoods by thieves who break into postal relay boxes in the hopes of discovering and cashing stolen checks and new credit cards.

According to U.S. Postal Inspector Micbael Baum, thieves have broken into 81 postal relay boxes in the last nine months. Postal relay boxes are the dark olive-color mail boxes used by the postal department for short-term mail storage between drop-offs and deliveries.

Postal inspectors believe that the thief or thieves are looking specifically for new, unsigned credit cards for use in purchasing hundreds of dollars worth of merchandise that can later be sold. Sometimes the thief simply sells the credit card itself.

The thieves' second choice is social security checks and various other types of checks that can be cashed by an easily obtainable fake photo identification with the name of the social security recipient.

Postal inspectors suspect that there are at least two people or groups of people who are robbing relay boxes, using one of two methods used to break into the boxes.

In some cases, a counterfeit or stolen key has been used to open the boxes and remove the contents. In other cases, a pry tool has been used to forcibly open the boxes.

Mail theft is a federal felony with a maximum penalty of $250,000 or five years in jail. Possession of a stolen or counterfeit postal key is also a federal felony, with a maximum penalty also of $250,000 or 10 years in jail.

U.S. Postal inspectors and postal police suggest that residents who see someone not wearing a postal worker's uniform opening any mailboxes get the license plate of the suspect's car, a description of the suspect and call 911 immediately.

Postal officials do not suggest confronting suspects.

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Doyle Drive

Continued from page 1

way's impact on the Richmond District because the Park Presidio Boulevard and 19th Avenue connector is largely ignored by highway officials and, he says, is a serious problem.

"The viaduct needs to be replaced and the MacArthur Tunnel is not up to seismic standards. At some point it will need to be rebuilt," Epstein said.

Caltrans is considering building an eight-lane drive to replace the current Doyle Drive, but some groups, including the Sierra Club, favor a six-lane option.

The task force also explored the possibility of more mass transit into the Presidio and the future of light rail on a lower deck of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Photo: Philip Liborio Gangi

Paul Epstein, a member of the Doyle Drive Task Force, answers questions from Richmond District residents.

Lauren McKean, a member of the Presidio Planning Team for the national park service, followed Epstein.

According to McKean, the planning team did a transportation analysis on the road system, mass transit, and pedestrian and bicycle use of the Presidio, so they can anticipate future transit needs. They studied the amount of traffic that cuts through the Presidio to get to other parts of the city and the number of cars currently using the Presidio's different gates.

"No one really supported a capacity increase. The Park Service does not want to see more land taken than necessary," McKean said, regarding the possibility of obtaining extra land for future access into the Presidio's activity areas.

After Caltrans receives the planning team's and task force's final reports this spring, it will do an environmental impact statement.

The environmental report is expected to take about three years to complete. After that, Caltrans will decide on a design and seek funding for the project.

When will work on Doyle Drive begin? "Realistically something may start in five years," said Epstein. "I hope all of us live long enough to see it."

The final speaker regarding the Presidio was Alison Kendall from the department of city planning. She acts as liaison between the mayor and the superintendent of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and represents the City on the Presidio Planning Team.

"You name it, virtually every City department is affected by the Presidio conversion," commented Kendall. "It is City policy to support efforts to address problems with Doyle Drive."

Kendall added that the City is gathering comments on the Presidio through commissions until the spring of 1993. "It is a key time to get input for planning and reviewing the plans for the Presidio."

During a question and answer session after the presentations, one man asked what will happen to the Presidio Scout House in the conversion. McKean answered, "Generally, things of that nature – you'll see continuing."

Another person was concemed about the impact of Doyle Drive construction on traffic. Epstein answered that the two roadbeds would exist side by side, allowing one side at a time to be built.

He added that Caltrans' main priority was to allow traffic to continue and that safety was their highest concem.

The question of why the City never implemented a 1950s freeway plan in the area also came up.

"San Francisco will not be ringed by freeways," said Epstein.

"Why couldn't all of Doyle Drive be built underground?" one person asked.

McKean replied that a tunnel of that size would require mechanical ventilation making the project too expensive.

Richmond District police captain Tom Suttmeier also gave an update on the District crime scene. Suttmeier had both good news and bad news to report. For 1992 overall, robberies increased by 20 percent; however, during the month of December, robberies decreased by 20 percent.

"We're not sure if the weather was responsible," said Suttmeier.

The Richmond's homeless population also decreased from a count of 245 people in November to 179 people in December. Suttmeier felt that, again, the weather may have played a role in the decrease.

The police were also successful in battling the November increase in burglaries around Geary Boulevard and Clement Street by adding more plain clothes officers. Officers have also been posing as clients for narcotics deals in the Western Addition projects.

Suttmeier cautioned residents to "harden" their houses against garage burglaries by always locking doors and fixing broken locks.

"Most thieves get in through unlocked doors or by pulling doors aside because locks aren't working properly," he said.

Muni's electrified 31-line is still 'waiting for the bus'

Muni's electrification of the 31-Balboa bus line is still delayed, and new handicap-accessible buses may not be available until 1994.

The delay is caused by Muni's commitment to serving disabled citizens by requiring all new buses to be wheelchair accessible.

At present, "disabled-friendly" diesel buses are readily available, but finding electric buses with this capacity is difficult, says Muni planner John Katz.

Muni anticipates acquiring the needed buses sometime in 1994, but an exact date is unknown. As an alteroative, Muni may consider leasing buses at a cost of under $100,000 per year, says Katz.

Another alternative Muni is considering is to purchase the 60-foot "double-reticulated" buses, but it would be hard to justify their use on the 31-Balboa line, when they are needed on busier lines such as tbe Missioo or Kearny street lines.

Ideally, says Muni official Michael Cronbach, all diesel buses would be replaced with electric vehicles, which are quieter, more easily maintained and use cheaper, cleaner fuel.

"Diesel buses are noisy and smelly, especially going up a hill [such as] between Divisadero and Mason," Muni Cronbach points out.

Katz concurs, explaining the logic behind the move to eliminate diesel buses and upgrade the Muni fleet to electric.

"We [can] save money because electric is easier to maintain. Diesel engines have many moving parts inside," be says, that require constant upkeep. With electric power, Katz points out, "all the power comes from outside," which means less wear and tear.

He goes on to explain, "We (the City) own the buses and we own the [electric] power, so all we have to do is move the power from one grid to another."

According to Peter Straus, director of Muni Service Planning, an estimated $350,000 a year is expected to be saved by using electric.

The 31-Balboa line was originally planned to be running on overhead wires by late 1991 or early 1992.

- *Charles Augustine*

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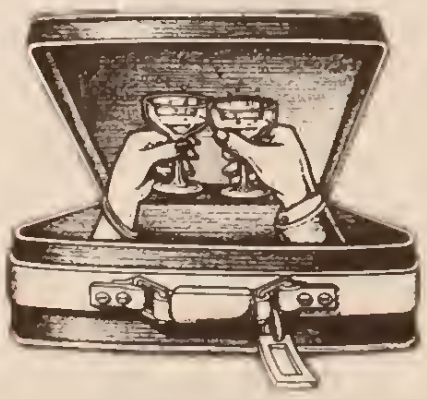

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Burglary/Residence/Hot-Prowl, Jan. 23, Geary/Arguello boulevards, 3:54 a.m.

Police responded to a report of a possible burglary in progress. When police arrived they were met by the victim, who said there was someone in his kitchen. As police pushed open the kitchen door, they saw the suspect standing in the kitchen by the back door. The police approached the suspect and placed him under arrest. Police checked the back door and found that it was locked from the inside.

During the police interview with the victim explained that he was asleep when he heard the sound of the kitchen door being closed. He listened further, and heard rustling in his kitchen. He was afraid for his safety, but got out of bed, yelled to the suspect that he was telephoning the police, and then went into the bathroom to dial 911. Police asked the suspect "Hey, what's going on here?" and the suspect replied, "The door was unlocked. I came in and locked the door behind me. I saw (the occupant) sleeping, so I closed the kitchen door while I looked for some food and something to drink."

The suspect, a transient white male, 5 feet 6 inches tall, 150 pounds, 32 years of age, was booked at the Richmond Station.

Grand Theft/Trick or Device, Jan. 19, Sixth Avenue/Geary Boulevard, 2:00 p.m.

The victim stated that she had just left a store on Geary Boulevard and was approached by a suspect who claimed he was from Africa and needed help. He told the victim that he had $40,000 and would like to donate it to charity because he could not bring the money back home. A second suspect approached and the first suspect related the same story to him.

Suspect one then stated that he would like to give the victim and second suspect $10,000 each in return for their help. Suspect one then requested that both parties give him $4,000 in good faith. The victim said that suspect two drove her and suspect one to her bank and she withdrew $4,000 and returned to the car and gave suspect the money. The second suspect gave victim a ride back to Sixth Avenue where she was dropped off. The suspect gave the victim a handkerchief-wrapped bundle, which was later found to contain cut-up newspapers.

Suspect one was black male, 30 years, 5 feet 11 inches tall, medium build, in dark-colored suit. Suspect two was black male, slim build, medium complexion, dressed in casual clothes.

Assault w/Deadly Weapon, Mace and Billy Club, Jan. 13, 500 block of Clement Street, 8:00 p.m.

Police responded to a person who had just been sprayed with a chemical tear gas. The victim said he had just been sprayed by several Asian males.

He said he and his friends were walking along Clement Street when the four Asian males approached him and yelled, "F—— Chinese!" The victim is Caucasian, as are his friends, and he was baffled by this verbal assault from the suspects. He stated that his friends were also scared and fled on foot, with one of the suspects chasing them. The victim also ran away, but in a different direction from his friends. He stated that three of the suspects chased him, catching him in the 500 block of Clement. They got in front of him and yelled something at him he didn't understand. At that time, the suspects sprayed a Mace-like aerosol in his face and head. Another suspect struck him on the left shoulder with a 12-inch, beige billy club.

The victim said he began striking and kicking at the suspects in self-defense. He stated that he believes he made contact with one of the suspects, kicking him in the groin. He also yelled, "Come on, come on," to the other suspects, but they ran to a vehicle which was parked at Sixth Avenue and Clement Street. He saw the suspects get into the vehicle and drive away in a four-door Accord, dark grey or blue in color. He said that the car made a "whistling" noise as it accelerated away.

The four suspects are described as an Asian male armed with a mace-like weapon, 6 feet 2 inches tall, thin build, black hair short on sides long, slicked back on top; an Asian male armed with billy club, 6 feet, fat, black hair and two other Asian males. All were in their 20s.

Attempted Kidnapping with a Gun, Jan. 12, Geary Boulevard between 23rd & 24th avenues, 9:15 p.m.

Police were dispatched regarding an attempted kidnapping.

Victim said that she was walking on the north side of Geary Boulevard toward 24th Avenue

Continued on page 14

Richmond District Crime Statistics

Crime Description	August	Septembe	October	November	December	January*	6 Month Totals
Homicide	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Rape	0	4	2	2	0	2	10
Robbery	22	31	26	44	35	30	188
Assault	51	43	50	61	40	35	280
Burglary	111	97	116	102	90	58	574
Theft (grend or petty)	263	254	282	214	239	110	1,362
Auto (break-ine or strippings)	109	45	109	104	131	85	583
Other	400	411	510	392	404	284	2,401
Totals	956	885	1095	919	941	604	6,004

*Recent statistics are incomplete and will increase as crimes are logged in the computer.

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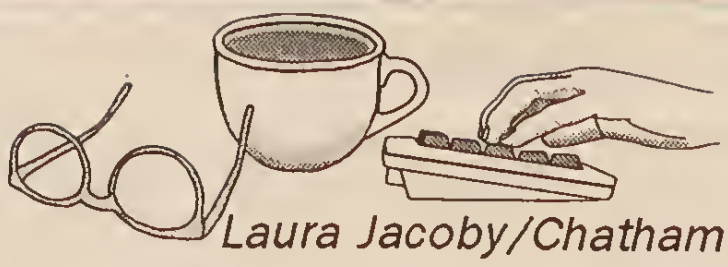

During the Middle Ages, a move was begun to change St. Valentine's Day from a day for courtship declarations to a day when people would pick a favorite saint and vow to emulate them during the rest of the year. This was not an idea that caught on. However, those of you with saintly aspirations – or just the inclination to be a real sweetheart – have plenty of choices for doing good deeds this month.

Russian American Community Services, which recently celebrated their 15th year of operations, is looking for volunteers to donate an hour or two weekly to assist frail elders with simple tasks such as going to the library, doing a little shopping or just playing cards. Call 387-5336 for more information.

You can do good, have fun and earn a little extra money, too, by becoming an umpire for the S.F. Youth Baseball League. Their season begins in April; call 753-7028 or 753-7029.

Spend a few hours (4 to 7 p.m.) helping with the San Francisco Food Bank's food drive at the Moscone Center on Tuesday, Feb. 9. You'll be gathering donated food from companies attending the National Grocers Association conference at the center, so come ready to work. The nonprofit food bank distributes food to over 200 social service agencies in San Francisco; call volunteer coordinator Belinda Cruz, 957-1076 to let them know you're coming.

The jokes will be on you – or for you – if you come to the Improv Comedy Club, 401 Mason St., on Saturday, Feb. 27, for an evening of award-winning comedians, hors d'oeuvres and complimentary drinks. The $25 reserved-seat tickets benefit the National Association for the Visually Handicapped, which provides free rehabilitative services to the partially sighted and is totally supported by donations. Tickets are available at NAVH, 3201 Balboa St., or by calling 221-3201.

Be a sweetheart for your five- to 12-year-old kids by enrolling them ,Tuesday, Feb. 23, for the spring session of the Richmond District Multi-Cultural Children's Art Classes. Registration starts at 10 a.m. and is first come, first served for the free Saturday morning classes, which run from March 6 through June 5. Classes include Shanju dollmaking from recycled materials, traditional Chinese dance study with a kite theme and artmaking through traditional Cherokee mythology.

In addition, there will be a "creative music lab" for middle-school students on four Thursday afternoons (May 13 through June 3, 3 to 4:30 p.m.) taught by renowned jazz artist and teacher, Regi Oliver. Students will perform at the Multi-Cultural Children's Fair on June 12. All the classes are funded by a grant from the Community Arts and Education Program of the S.F. Arts Commission.

Send flowers to a friend by calling the American Cancer Society's Daffodil Hotline, 415-394-7684 to order a daffy bouquet – 10 for $5 (for $8 they'll supply a vase) or request a special basket of 25 daffodils for $50. The cancer society is raising funds for cancer research, education and patient services by selling these bright yellow flowers of spring, recognized as a symbol of hope for cancer patients. Call the hotline by March 15 to order your blossoms, which will be available March 29 for pick-up at locations throughout the City or delivery for orders of $50 or more.

"We want to be good neighbors," says Leslie Buchanan, public affairs officer for the V.A. Medical Center at 4150 Clement St. To that end, the V.A.M.C. is tackling the parking problem in their neighborhood by asking employees to be especially careful not to block residents' driveways when they park on the surrounding streets. In addition, the V.A.M.C.'s security personnel patrol the immediate neighborhood to be sure no cars are parked illegally. Residents are invited to call the V.A.M.C. security department directly at 750-2003 if they have any problems with illegally parked vehicles.

The ever-present parking problem which plagues Clement Street is a big factor in the decision for Lombardi's Sports store to leave 152 Clement, where they have been in business since 1948. Steve Lombardi, Sr. says the move to the old Ron Greenspan building on Polk and Jackson streets, expected for May 1, will provide customers with more parking and larger store facilities as well.

Speaking of parking, if you haven't heard yet, you will definitely want to know that parking in a bus zone or a wheelchair access spot now merits a $250 fine; illegal use of handicapped parking zones or blocking handicapped ramps is $275. If you have a legal parking place right now, my recommendation is that you leave your car there and begin taking the bus wherever you go.

Four of Muni's outstanding employees for 1992 are from the Richmond District. Don Der, Patricia Moore, Choy-Hing Pong and Patrick Sheung will be the guests at a reception in their honor, Thursday, Feb. 11, at Oz in the Westin St. Francis. Cheers to you all!

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is looking for "Clean Air Champions" to help celebrate the American Lung Association Clean Air Week in May. If you know someone who has helped to fight air pollution by biking to work, organizing carpools or, perhaps, by teaching others, call 1-800-AIR-HELP for an entry form. The deadline for nominations is March 8.

Champions of all sorts are the theme of Max Christensen's new book, *Turning Points: Stories of People who made a Difference*, based on his weekly syndicated column, "Turning Points," which ran for 14 years. Max, who lives in Laurel Heights and is the Rector Emeritus of St. James' Episcopal Church, has gathered a variety of remarkable tales. From William Colgate, who was told by a ship captain to "make an honest soap – give a full pound," and went on to found the Colgate company to Susan B. Anthony, a Quaker, who made it her life's work to gain constitutional equality for women in America, the stories are intriguing and often unexpected insights to the lives of people who changed the world for the better. The book is hot off the press from Westminster/John Knox Press and will be available at the Cathedral Store on Nob Hill and other local bookstores soon.

File photo
Max Christensen

For those of you who are sick of hearts and flowers, here's something completely different – Lieutenant Jack Ballentine, formerly of the Sixth Avenue police station, is helping promote a two-hour tear gas self-defense course offered by the S.F. Police Department in conjunction with the Security Training Institute. The $40 class includes a California certificate of training in the use of Mace, which is valid for life and is required by law for individuals wishing to carry Mace. The Monday night class is taught by members of the S.F.P.D. at Fort Mason and will also stress basic safety tips. For more information or reservations, call 334-1151.

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Nurse and cancer survivor offers help for women

by Zaza Urbanek,

"I don't want women to be scared. Through my work and my books, I've wanted to reassure women honestly." Kerry McGinn, 51, an oncology nurse at the California Pacific Medical Center for many years and a resident of the Richmond District for the past 20 years, is a woman of many talents and pursuits.

She not only chose to devote her life to treating cancer patients, but she raised four children and has just published her fourth book. *Women's Cancers*, a book she has co-authored with Pamela Haylock, another cancer specialist, is a comprehensive book about cancers, those which affect women specifically.

Women's Cancers is a detailed book that answer all sorts of questions women may have, from how theories on cancer prevention to the best treatments. Readers will find all the answers to questions either patients are afraid to ask their doctors or that doctors don't know how to answer themselves. "What does it feel like emotionally to go through radiation?" or "Once my cancer treatment is over, what do I do?"

"This book is what I wish I had known and read all in one book," says McGinn, who wanted to book to be a source of emotional support as well as an instructive guide.

It is certain that cancer is much more than the painful discovery and the scary treatments. It is also all the emotional questions related to a life change. What McGinn refers as "the mourning of an accumulation of 'little' physical losses."

Cancer changes a person's life forever. People with a cancer diagnosis feel uncertainty and loss and do not have the time to deal with these emotions before they must make vital treatment decisions and make them quickly.

"I want to show that life is just beginning after the cancer treatment," McGinn states.

"Many women feel let down after many months of intensive treatment. They no longer feel protected." McGinn feels that it is mostly a lack of information about the sicknesses themselves and about the many support groups that a cancer patient needs to overcome.

Photo: Philip Liborio Gangi

Author and oncology nurse, Kerry McGinn, reflects on her work.

McGinn didn't originally plan to become such a prolific medical writer. "I owe my writer's beginnings to my mother. She was the writer," McGinn confides.

McGinn's mother was working on a book about ostomy (an operation that creates an artificial anus), but her health was declining rapidly, and there was very little chance she would meet the publisher's deadline.

"My mother's book was too important not to finish it. I decided to help her with it," McGinn recalls. "I worked very long hours, and everyone at the publisher's worked overtime, so that the book could be published before Mom ..." McGinn does not finish the sentence.

The challenge was met successfully. The book came out within one month, and McGinn's mother lived to see her book completed and published.

McGinn recalls her mother's last words, "they were the best three weeks of my life," she said, referring to the book's release less than a month prior to her death.

After completing her mother's book, McGinn kept writing. Having successfully tackled the hard work of writing most of one book, she knew there were a few more books she wanted to write – books that could help women cancer patients.

McGinn's job as an oncology nurse with the Planetree Unit at the California Pacific Medical Center, dictated her topics.

"I realized there was no specific literature about how to examine one's breasts, what lumps, bumps, or pains to look for," McGinn says. She thought of writing a book on that specific subject. That was *The Informed Women's Guide to Breast Health*, published by Bull Books in 1987. It is still the primary book recommended by the Breast Health Center at the California Pacific Medical Center.

"Women are scared to examine their breasts, and the doctors don't take the time to guide them," McGinn says. "The important goal is to get women acquainted with their bodies on a monthly basis."

Two years later, in 1989, McGinn detected her own breast cancer. After the breast examination "where the doctor told me it was nothing," McGinn opted for quite a different diagnosis.

"I used my own book at that point and I came back for more checkups," she says. Her persistence paid off – the doctor changed his diagnosis, and she underwent a painful double mastectomy. McGinn had become her own living example of the value of breast self-examination.

There are 175,000 cases of breast cancer a year in the United States, 46,000 of which women are projected to die from. Today's rate of breast cancer incidents is one woman out of nine. Early detection is essential in providing women with their best chance to survive breast cancer.

Through accurate information and better understanding of the many issues around cancer, from the physical sensations to the intangible, emotional ones, "women have a chance to reduce their anxiety and make constructive changes in their lives," McGinn says.

It is certain that a woman looks at her priorities quite differently when she has been confronted with the disease. It is a time not to be a victim and patients realize they have the strength to undergo a lot. "You undoubtedly appreciate yourself more," says McGinn.

The important thing, she concludes, is to "keep the spirit of adventure alive. Cancer makes every patient think about life in a different way, and it is important to keep that same zest for life once cancer has been beaten."

McGinn practices what she preaches. She has appeared on many radio talk shows and is planning future magazine articles on breast and other cancers.

McGinn's books can be found at the Green Apple Bookstore in the Richmond District and at Books Inc. in Laurel Village. For more information, call (510) 865-5282.

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Rooster takes charge

Photo: Christine T. Anderson

Members of the Jing Mo Athletic Association played musical instruments as the lion edged closer to the lettuce (top center), which bring good luck to anyone who happens to attract its falling leaves. The group performed at City libraries to welcome in the Chinese year 4691.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

The Star of India

Mori Amedi

The cuisine of northern India is being served at its best at the Star India Restaurant at 3721 Geary Blvd. near Arguello Boulevard, only a few houses away from the Indian consulate.

The owners of Star India are two brothers, Nauinder and Nekhbir Singh, who gave my guest and me a warm welcome. As we sat at our table, the food server, Mr. Amarjid started us off with the traditional Indian bread called "nan."

We tasted the different varieties of nan, which included plain, onion kuluch, whole wheat and garlic-flavored. From the very beginning of our meal, I realized that we were going to have the finest cuisine that northern India has to offer.

Indian cuisine is divided into four main categories. First, the "tandoori" type food, which is made in a clay oven. Second, curry based food, usually prepared like stew. Then there are steamed and roasted vegetable dishes, and finally "bryani" (rice).

While we were chatting and eating nan, our host served us a very nice Cabernet Sauvignon, by Kenwood Vineyards. Star India offers a limited quantity of California wines, along with beers imported from India.

By this stage of our dinner the Singh brothers and chef Pabla must have served every type of nan in northern India. The only thing missing was the mosala-dosa, a large round bread made from rice flour, which is customary in southern India. Chef Pabla promised me some on my next visit.

Before we knew it, another chef appeared with two sizzling platters. These consisted of a combination of chicken prawns and seekh kabob (marinated minced lamb) served with a variety of authentic Indian herbs and spices.

Later, I learned the other chef – chef Rampalsaroi – specializes in the clay oven tandoori cuisine. I congratulated chef Rampalsaroi on his expertise and commented that few chefs can keep the juices inside the chicken or lamb when they cook in the clay ovens.

Following the tandoori came the vegetarian dishes, arranged as a sampler platter by chef Pabla. "Papadam" (sun-dried lentil wafers served with two dips: a zesty mint, and sweet mango tamarind) was served, as were "samosas," pastry puffs filled with potatoes, green peas and spices. Last but not least came "sag paneer," which is spinach and mild cheese cubes.

My personal favorite was the bryani with lamb chunks cooked with saffron and nuts. There were also cold soups and a salad with diced tomato, onion and cucumber. These cool dishes offer relief alongside the hot, spicy curry dishes.

My guest asked chef Pabla if he could make the curry sauce milder on her fish masala, and the chef did not hesitate to do so.

Our taste buds were pleasurably overwhelmed by this array of classic Indian dishes, but to end our meal we tried "glub jaman," fried cottage cheese balls soaked in sweet syrup, "kheer," which is rice pudding with raisins and nuts and "kulfi," saffron-flavored pistachios and almonds.

The Singh brothers attribute much of their success to a dedicated group of employees who help create the relaxing atmosphere of Star India, as well as its gourmet cuisine, which is made entirely from scratch. The Singhs also own "Shiva," a restaurant in Munich, Germany.

Star India is open seven days for lunch and dinner. Call 386-6208.

Activities at senior center

The Golden Gate Park Senior Center offers art, sewing and dance classes, singing groups and bridge games to San Francisco seniors, age 60 and older.

Other regular activities and classes are also scheduled. Dues are $10 per year, or a 50-cent fee per day for non-members. The center is located at 6101 Fulton St, at 37th Avenue. For more information, call 665-7015.

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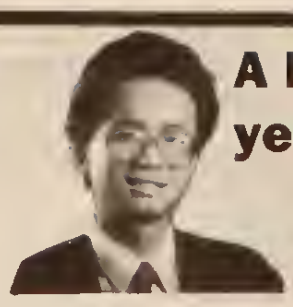
A Look at the new year in real estate



John M. Lee

At the beginning of each year, I always analyze the past year's real estate statistics and compare them with my intuition. As a real estate broker, I have a good idea of price fluctuations and activity in the marketplace, but it is good to verify theories with hard statistics.

During the past year San Francisco real estate owners finally realized that we are in a buyer's market and that, in order to sell, houses must be priced realistically. The uncertainty was whether prices were going to stay flat or go down even more.

1992 started with uncertainty as we had just completed a fairly good sales year in 1991. The number of residential single family home sales in the Richmond was up 57 percent from 1990. However, the average sales price was down 3.2 percent, a mixed result which indicated that demand definitely did not exceed supply.

The good news was that interest rates were dropping and were at a 20-year low. Everyone was refinancing, and the low rates spurred on the sales in the first quarter of 1992.

However, the buying spree ended just as quickly as it started, and we settled into a normal real estate market once again. There were 207 sales of single family homes in the Richmond in 1992, compared with 203 in 1991, approximately a 2 percent increase. The average sales price in 1992 was $441,000 versus $478,000 in 1991, down 7.7 percent.

In San Francisco as a whole, the number of sales increased by about 6.9 percent in 1992, with the prices declining about 1.5 percent. In the Richmond then, we did not do as well as the rest of the City in terms of both activity and price.

Looking at the data, our sales activity is back to where it was from 1988-1989. The last time we had more sales was in 1988, with 233 single family homes sold in the Richmond.

Two main factors led to the decline in prices in the Richmond. One, sellers were more aware that we were in a slower market and that asking prices needed to be more realistic for a property to sell. Thus sellers were pricing their properties lower, and more began selling because of it. Some sellers, waiting for the last two years for the real estate market to pick up in terms of prices – it did not – felt that it was time to just sell the property and move on with their lives.

The second factor was that we had many more higher priced homes in the Richmond District and the prices of those decreased significantly more that starter homes, thus skewing the average sales price data somewhat.

What is going to happen in 1993? It is anyone's guess. My outlook is that it will be very similar to 1991 and 1992. Activity will be about the same, about 200 to 225 homes sold in the Richmond, and the sales price will stay about the same, with a 0 to 5 percent appreciation.

I believe that mortgages will stay at the present level for at least the first part of the year because President Clinton will maintain the status quo before tinkering with the economy. The rest of the United States appears to be recovering from the recession in a steady manner. California was the last one to enter into recession and will be the last one to recover from it.

However, even with the lower interest rates, typical homes in the Richmond are still out of reach for most people in San Francisco, and only a small percentage of our citizens can afford them. There have been many layoffs in the Bay Area. The layoffs of middle management and other staff are a sign of permanent restructuring by large corporations. Unfortunately, these employees are prime buyers of real estate.

Although economic indicators in California are not pointing up yet, consumer confidence is increasing, according to all the polls. Consumer perception is powerful because it is reality rather than the hard numbers. We may yet be surprised at the real estate market this year.

All things considered, I think 1993 will be a year where prices will remain steady and homes will take an average amount of time to sell. So, what should you do if you are thinking of selling your home in 1993?

If you are trading to another home (moving up to a larger home, or down to a smaller one), selling in the early part of the year might make sense for you. The interest rates are low, so even if you sell a little low you can probably more than compensate when you buy, because you can lock in on an interest rate at its 20-year low and get a better price on the buying end.

If you are cashing out, this is probably a good time too, because the interest rate is low; consequently, there are more qualified buyers available for your property.

If you are thinking about buying, I would do it this year because it looks like prices have flattened out, and activity has held steady. What that means is that we have probably reached the bottom in terms of prices and soon they will be going back up. Whatever you do this year in real estate, I wish you the best of luck!

John M. Lee is currently the top selling real estate broker at Prudential California Realty in San Francisco. If you have any real estate questions, please call him at (415) 474-1311.

Senior housing fair comes to the SFJCC in February

"Housing is the number one concern for Bay Area seniors. People are worried because there's not enough senior housing in the Bay Area," says Eileen Goldman, director of senior services at Jewish Family and Children's Services (JFCS).

To address these concerns, JFCS is co-sponsoring a Senior Housing Fair on Sunday, Feb. 7 at Temple Emanu-El, Arguello Boulevard and Lake Street in San Francisco.

The fair will help Bay Area seniors and their adult children learn more about housing options available to them. Representative from nonprofit and private retirement residences, board and care facilities, life-care communities and other services enabling seniors to continue living in their homes will be present at the fair.

"The information presented at the fair should go a long way toward helping people ask good questions and make good decisions about their futures," says Goldman.

For more information about the Senior Housing Fair, call Goldman at 561-1217.

Free weekday Strybing tours

Weekday tours of Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens are now being offered to individuals and small groups, free of charge.

The tours are led by Strybing docents.and the walks depart at 1:30 p.m. from the Strybing Bookstore, located near the Ninth Avenue and Lincoln Way entrance to the park. For more information, call 661-1316.

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The real oil spill in our backyard

Maria Hon

More than 780 million gallons of motor oil go in and out of American cars each year. About half of them become the REAL oil spill – in our driveways, sewers and garbage cans. This is the oil spill that keeps folks like me awake at night. This is DIY (Do-It-Yourselfer) Oil, the oil of the self-reliant mechanic, who prefers to do car work at home and save money. An EPA survey estimates that about 65 percent of the DIY oil is illegally dumped. And that's no good news. Consider the following:

• Oil poured on the ground doesn't evaporate – it sinks in. Poured down storm sewers, the heavy metals of the oil end up in the bay or the Pacific, into the fish and into our stomachs.

• Oil thrown in the garbage can ends up in our landfill where it leaks into our ground-water supplies or into coastal waters.

• Americans illegally dump 120 million gallons of used motor oil each year down storm drains, in the trash, and onto the ground – the equivalent of 11 times the amount of the Exxon Valdez spill!

• Just one pint of oil can make a one-acre slick on a lake or stream. The resulting film blocks out sunlight needed for plants to photosynthesize. Without photosynthesis, there'll be no oxygen. To clean up the spill, we need to have microorganisms eat it up. These little creatures need oxygen to do their job, as do fish and other aquatic life.

The Solution: RECYCLE IT!

Used motor oil is ideal for recycling. Motor oil never wears out. It just gets dirty. As it does its job in the crankcase of your convertible, additives in the oil break down, and contaminants get in. When oil is recycled, it simply gets cleaned up through a process called "re-refining." When oil is re-refined, impurities are removed by heating and filtering, producing "new" oil. Close to home, in Newark, is Evergreen Oil, which takes in about 12 million gallons of used oil each year.

If you are a do-it-yourselfer, how do you make sure your used motor oil gets to Evergreen re-refinery and not into some pristine waterway?

• Buy a reusable oil change receptacle (these will make your oil change and recycling tasks even easier), or a single-use oil change kit. You may also use your own receptacles to hold your used oil.

• Take the used oil to one of the following service stations, or ask your regular service station if they will take it. Check with them before you go.

Participating service stations include:
Richmond/Haight
Masonic Auto Service
500 Masonic Ave.
567-8771
$1 charge per gallon.
and
Forest Hill/West Portal
Forest Hill Union
300 Laguna Honda Blvd.
566-9934
$1.50 charge per gallon.

A contractor's license can make a difference

Bonnie Headlee

If you need to hire contractors for home improvement work, don't forget to check their licenses!

In California, any work valued over $300 requires a state contractor's license. To obtain a license, an individual must have verifiable work experience and pass an exam given by the State Contractor's License Board.

But don't accept a simple "yes" if contractors tell you they are licensed – ask to see the "pocket license." Homeowners have often been misled by contractors who, upon careful questioning, admit that they hold only a city business license.

Consumers should also go one step further: ask what classification the license is in. Most consumers are unaware that there are over 40 specialty licenses, and a contractor with one type of license may not be qualified to perform other types of work. Aside from not having the level of experience necessary for the job, the contractor may be working illegally.

If you have questions about the various license categories or how to check out a contractor, The Trades Guild regularly screens contractors for proper licensing, bonding, insurance and references, and then refers those who qualify to the public. In addition, speakers are available for community groups to help educate homeowners about what to look for when hiring contractors.

For a free brochure, "Hints on Hiring a Tradesperson," call The Trades Guild at 777-4045.

Bonnie Headlee is director of the Trades Guild.

Business Changes

The Richmond Review will be featuring changes in the District's business community every month or so. If you have a business that opened in the past six months, please call us at 221-4228 for inclusion into the next chart. —*Editor*

Who's New

Singapore Orchid Cafe
Singapore Cuisine
1408 Clement St.
752-1688

Vicki's Cafe
3536 Balboa St.
386-2180

LaBelle Saison
French Cuisine
California St. /23rd Ave.
751-7066

Tacqueria "De Lean"
Mexican Grill
5549 Geary Blvd.
379-9679

Village Market
Groceries and produce
4555 California St.
221-0445

Top Marks Consultants
Tutoring and career counseling
2327 Anza St.
752-4011

The Kitchen
Restaurant
343 Clement St.

Who's Out

Bertha's Jigsaw Chili
2512 Clement St.

Lincoln Park Cleaners
6849 California St.

State of the Art
(moved to 524 Hayes)
101 Clement St.

Cafe Avanti
1829 Clement St.

Union 76
Geary Blvd./33th Ave.

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Beware when hiring financial 'help'

Eric Tyson

Alice (not her real name), a Bay Area resident, struck out the first four times she sought financial help.

At the recommendation of her accountant, she first called a "financial consultant" at a major brokerage firm. After explaining she wanted a conservative investment, the broker sold her a Putnam mutual fund that primarily held aggressive growth stocks.

After buying the fund and getting her first account statement, Alice noticed a good deal less money (several thousand dollars) in the fund than she had invested. The broker had told her that the fund paid a four percent commission and that she need not concern herself with that since Putnam paid him the commission.

Alice did a little of her own research and quickly discovered that Putnam, in fact, had paid the broker, out of her investment, a 6.5 percent commission. Steamed, Alice called the Securities and Exchange Commission, and after jumping through many hoops, the brokerage firm coughed up nearly $2000 for the broker's lie about the commission amount.

Next, following a friend's recommendation, Alice turned to a financial planner who promptly tried to sell her a limited partnership (LP) that should return, according to the planner, upwards of 20 to 40 percent per year.

Alice took a gander at the prospectus – a wonderfully long document written by attorneys – and saw in black and white on page two that the LP paid the selling broker a 10 percent sales commission. After a little more reading in a financial magazine, she learned that LP returns were also burdened by high management fees.

Alice did not return the dozen or so follow-up calls after she realized the financial planner was "affiliated" with a national firm that sells the same commission-based financial products through brokerage firms.)

Alice then enrolled in an adult education class where the "teacher," a "certified financial planner," offered a "free" one-hour consultation to all of his students.

During her one-hour session, Alice learned that she should invest in an insurance company annuity plan. Investigation revealed high sales commissions and management fees. Annuities also did not make sense for Alice as she was near retirement and not in a high-tax bracket.

At this point, most consumers would probably have put their money in the mattress, but Alice really wanted help. After listening to a financial planner, who was a guest on a KNBR radio call-in program, she had the planner mail his background materials to her. In addition to the certified financial planning (CFP) degree, this planner had a seemingly endless list of alphabetic credentials: RIA, BSCE, LLB, MBA.

Wary of sales commissions, Alice liked the idea that the planner charged $350 for his time to help her with investing her money. Part way through their two-hour, $350 consultation, he started the push to persuade her that what she really needed was to hire him as an ongoing money manager and pay him $2000 per year for the service, in addition to investment management fees.

That seemed like a lot of money to Alice, who had $150,000 to invest. She declined his offer and the planner, $350 check in hand, stormed out of her house.

The Moral of the Story

Alice's case highlights two major problems consumers often encounter. First, investors absolutely, positively, must do their homework before hiring any financial advisor. Despite enthusiastic recommendations from her accountant and another from a friend, Alice ended up with bad choices.

Secondly, the financial planning field is a minefield for consumers. The Consumer Federation of America, the Washington, nonprofit consumer advocacy group, said in a recent report that, "investors go up against a deadly combination of abusive securities industry practices and regulatory inattentiveness when investing their money."

The fundamental problem in the financial planning and brokerage fields is the conflicts of interest that are created when people sell commission-based financial products. Yesterday's stock and insurance brokers have now all acquired certified financial planning degrees and are marketing themselves as financial consultants.

This would be like a Honda dealer calling himself a transportation consultant. Your Honda dealer is a car salesman and he makes his living selling Hondas. He's not going to tell you about public transit options or about the Ford Taurus.

If a financial planner or financial consultant sells any commission-based financial products, he is a financial salesperson – period.

If you want objective help with your financial situation, find an advisor who works by the hour, has good references and has top notch financial services industry experience as well as a solid educational background. Also beware of so-called fee-only advisors. Many of these folks are selling ongoing money management services or estate planning legal services.

Eric K. Tyson is a financial writer, lecturer and counselor. He has been published in Parenting, the San Francisco Examiner, and the New York Times. Prior to founding the Financial Information Center, a financial counseling firm, he was a management consultant to Fortune 500 financial firms and earned his M.B.A. at Stanford.

End of the line

Photo courtesy of Greg Gaar collection

In 1925, the intersection of El Camino Del Mar and Point Lobos Avenue was where the streetcar line terminated amidst sand dunes and sparse vegetation.

• • • Letters to the editor • • •

Editor:

I am responding to the letter in the November 1992 Richmond ReView regarding the Apples for Students program.

Both George Peabody Elementary and Wallenberg High schools would appreciate support from readers who are not already saving the pink Safeway receipts for a particular school.

These schools deserve assistance readers can give by sending Safeway receipts dated Sept. 9 to March 6 to:

George Peabody Elementary School
Parent Faculty Organization
251 Sixth Avenue; S.F., CA 94118 OR:
Raoul Wallenberg High School
Safeway Apples for Students Program
40 Vega Street, S.F., CA 94115

Thank you. I send my personal best to a fine publication.

M. Adele Lafrenz, parent volunteer

Editor:

A lifestyle feature mixing art with biography is a difficult job for any but the most professional of writers.

Zaza Urbanek's January 1993 feature on author, Fred J. Fisher, shows just that kind of professionalism. The ReView always contains first-class writing, and this piece is another fine example.

Thank you for running the feature – and for the column inches you gave our book *A Punkin in the Frost.*

Joel Markman, Managing Editor
Cammium Phate Publisher

Choices

"I can't believe I did it."
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From where I sit

Mayor Frank Jordan

Recently, I signed into law the Comprehensive Environmental Lead Poisoning Prevention Program sponsored by San Francisco Supervisor President Kevin Shelley.

Lead poisoning is the most significant environmental health problem facing our children today. Even a small amount of lead can stunt a child's growth and/or reduce his or her ability to hear, learn, read, think and be attentive. Children most at risk for lead poisoning live in houses and apartments constructed before 1960 when lead-based paint was utilized in large amounts on the inside and outside of buildings. Because 74 percent of all San Francisco housing was built before 1950, the risk is particularly great here in the City.

A recent City Department of Public Health survey found lead poisoning in one in 12 children tested and the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has ranked the San Francisco-Oakland metropolitan area ninth in the nation with children at risk of lead poisoning.

It is time that the City take strong action to prevent lead poisoning. By making all residents aware of the problem, we can begin to significantly reduce childhood lead poisoning. The passage of this comprehensive lead poisoning prevention package is a major step in that direction.

Specifically, the legislation calls for broad education and disclosure efforts about lead poisoning prevention aimed at parents, health and child care providers, tenants, contractors, landlords and others. It integrates medical screening and treatment of children and identifies priority areas on which to focus resources, identification of non-housing sites at high risk of lead contamination.

The program also calls for the inspection of homes where children with high levels of lead in their blood live; the creation of incentive programs for property owners to reduce lead hazards and the establishment of a special fund for lead poisoning prevention efforts; and requires the City to seek recommendations from the citizen advisory committees for further City action to prevent lead poisoning; and coordination of City agencies to meet lead abatement and prevention goals.

To support Supervisor Shelley's program, I have directed my Office of Community Development to allocate $500,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to provide full funding to initiate a comprehensive lead abatement program in 1993 focusing on assessment of childcare centers and neighborhood facilities serving children, including parent education and necessary facility rehabilitation.

A cooperative effort between the City, health care providers, parents, the news media and community groups is essential to increasing public awareness about the dangers of lead poisoning in San Francisco and ways in which we can prevent future lead poisoning in our children.

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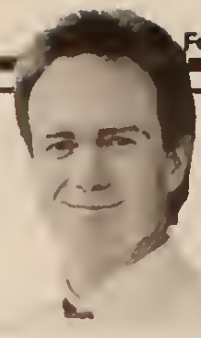

It was a cold winter afternoon and I was driving west along Highway 19, a couple of miles north of Cache Creek Canyon Regional Park. Hazy sunlight slanted down into the canyon where the two-lane road turned and twisted alongside the creek.

Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I saw it. Standing like a monument to freedom on the bare limb of a tree across the creek, was a bald eagle.

After a quick glance in the rear-view mirror, I stopped in the middle of the road. I rolled down the window and stared at the creature chosen as the most fitting symbol of the United States of America.

It's easy to see why the bird leaves such an impression. Standing more than three feet in height, it has an eight-foot wingspan and, with its white plumage, orange beak and legs, a regal bearing.

Although the bald eagle is the symbol of this country, I'm convinced that few Americans have actually seen one in the wild. Until that cold winter afternoon last week, I had never seen one before either.

Oh, I saw one in a small zoo once, its big talons wrapped around the dead branch of a dead tree, but that doesn't count. It's not the same. A bird that represents a great and sacred freedom worthy of fighting and dying for is not confined in a wire cage.

I pulled over to the side of the road and got out of the car for a better look. The big eagle craned its neck a few degrees to check me out, but didn't flinch. When you're the symbol of a country as large as this one, you don't get ruffled at the sight of a gawking, unarmed citizen. It wouldn't be dignified.

As I stood there staring at the eagle, I couldn't help but think about Joe Beebe.

I'd met Beebe at the park an hour or so earlier – a genial, 72-year-old man with a remarkably unlined face smiling beneath the brim of a baseball cap and wearing a lined Levis jacket to ward off the cold.

Beebe told me he was forced to retire after having two heart attacks. Now he works as the park's host, taking care of things and making sure campers and visitors don't get out of line.

His home is a small recreational vehicle parked on the grounds. He'll stay at the park, he says, until spring. Gets too hot around here in the summer. Then he'll head for the coast. Maybe do some crabbing.

When he gets tired of that, he'll pick up and go somewhere else – Florida, Texas, Oregon, Montana – who knows?

"People hop into planes and take off for Europe on their vacations," he says, "but what for? I'll bet there's a lot of places in the states they haven't seen. It's all here."

Right now, he's enjoying living in the park. It's quiet. Peaceful. Beautiful. Early in the morning, the bald eagles swoop through the canyon along the creek, maybe pluck a carp out of the water for breakfast. The deer come into camp at night. Sometimes he sees them walking along the ridge during the day.

"My daughter tried to get me to move to a trailer park," says Beebe. "But what good is that? You own the trailer, but you still have to pay rent every month."

Beebe (it's a Scottish name, his ancestors were beekeepers) says he doesn't get lonely. He's got books. There are so many books to read. He's got a color television and videocassette recorder. When he's staying somewhere where the reception is good, he'll tape 30 or 40 movies. But he won't watch them until later. Sometimes he trades tapes with other people he runs into.

"If there's someone around to talk to, I'll talk to 'em," he says, "If there's no one around, I'll enjoy being by myself."

There's no phone at the park, but that doesn't bother Beebe. If he needs to call someone, he drives four miles down the road to Rumsey.

If you haven't already gotten the idea by now, Beebe is pretty much his own master these days. He's a free agent, a man who wakes up in the morning and puts his own brand on the day. Like the eagle poised on the limb of the tree across the river, he sits when he wants to sit and moves when he wants to move.

"I'm thinking I might climb that mountain one of these days," he says, pointing to where the land shifts abruptly from the valley floor and rises steeply to the top of a bluff. "I wonder what's on the other side?"

Police Blotter

Continued from page 7

when the suspect drove to the curb adjacent to victim.

The victim saw the suspect roll down the passenger window and heard him say, "How do I get to 101 North?"

Victim stated that she went closer to the vehicle to answer suspect. She got approximately five feet from the vehicle when she saw that suspect was pointing a silver-colored revolver at her.

Victim heard suspect say, "You wanna get into the car." Victim fearing for her safety, fled on foot from the suspect.

Suspect was white male in his 20s, thin, had collar-length scraggly hair, pointed chin, wore dark zippered windbreaker.

Armed Robbery/Business, Jan. 22, Clement Street/32nd Avenue, 5:45 p.m.

The waiter of the restaurant said he was at the cash register when the suspects entered. One suspect showed the barrel of a gun under his jacket and told the waiter in English to open the cash register. After he opened the register, the suspects took the money from the cash drawer and fled on foot west on Clement Street. The crime lab was notified. None of the customers said that they could identify the suspects if seen again.

The three suspects were described as an Asian male, early 20s, 5 feet 6 inches tall, 110 pounds, thin build, dark long jacket with hood and two possibly Vietnamese males, early 20s, 5 feet 7 inches tall, black hair, dark clothing.

Deadlines

Submissions are due by the 24th of the month. Mail to: The Richmond Review, P.O. Box 590596, S.F., CA 94159.

The Richmond ReView
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February Calendar of Events

1-7

Youth Baseball League: Sign-ups for Tee-ball (ages six to eight), Pinto (ages seven to eight) and Mustang (ages nine to 10) baseball teams are underway at neighborhood recreation centers and playgrounds. Sponsored by S.F. Recreation and Park Department, F.L.A.M.E., and P.A.L. For more information, call 753-7029.

Exhibition: Art glass by Louis Comfort Tiffany and his contemporaries, as well as ancient iridescent glass that inspired the works, are on exhibit at the de-Young Museum, Golden Gate Park. Free with admission to museum; 863-3330.

Musical: "A Chorus Line," will be performed by Young People's Teen Musical Theatre Company. Adult admission is $6, children under 13 years, $3. The production will benefit the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and Bay Positives. Monday, Feb. 1, Carol Channing Theatre at Lowell High School, 1101 Eucalyptus Dr., 8 p.m.; 554-9523.

Coping with Drug Addiction: Families and friends of drug abusers can find help at Nar-Anon Family Groups. Nar-Anon is a free, anonymous, peer-support group of people whose lives have been affected by someone else's drug addiction. Meetings are held every Friday at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, 2425 Geary Blvd., Fifth Floor, *Doctors' Dining Room*, 7:30-9:30 p.m. For more information call 985-5255.

Fantasia Cookie Decorating: Fantasia Bakery is holding a free cookie decorating party, on Saturday, Feb. 6 at 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at 2465 California St. (in Laurel Village).

Workshop: UCSF is sponsoring a workshop on prejudice in everyday situations. Role playing and experiential exercises will be used to simulate life experiences. Cost is $50, but no one is turned away for lack of funds, Saturday, Feb. 6, Clinical Sciences Building, 521 Parnassus Ave., Room C130. 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Pre-registration required, call 476-5222.

Mushroom Walk: The Mycological Society will lead ongoing Sunday walks for 2-3 hours along the Land's End headlands looking for wild mushrooms. All ages welcome. Meet in front of the Palace of the Legion of Honor, 34th Avenue and Clement Street, 9 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 7. If it rains, come on Sunday, Feb. 14; 795-0495.

Discussion: The Society for Humanistic Judaism presents Wolfgang and Arlene Homburger, of the American Friends to discuss their experience in the only village in Israel where Jews and Palestinians live and work together. U.C. Laurel Heights Campus, 3333 California St., Sunday, Feb. 7, 4:30 p.m., 239-6785.

8-14

Benefit Performance: Bay Area humorists Geoff Hoyle and Ian Shoales and Cajun storyteller Anne Galjour will give a benefit performance for the San Francisco Waldorf School at Cowell Theater, Fort Mason, Monday, Feb. 8, 7:30 p.m., $20 advance ticket fee/$25 at door.

Healthy Heart Fair: Lung function and body fat testing, blood pressure screening, relaxing muscles, and diabetes screening. Healthy heart nutrition samples and instructions. Information on weight loss, stress management and smoking cessation. Wednesday, Feb. 10, California Pacific Medical Center, Conference Room, 2333 Buchanan St., first floor, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; 923-3440.

Film Presentation: Myles Connell's 1992 film, "In Uncle Robert's Footsteps," dealing with the immigrant experience of a young Irish man who joins his established uncle in New York, will show at the United Irish Cultural Center, 2700 45th Ave. at Sloat Boulevard., $3 donation at door, Thursday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m.

Arts and Crafts: Preschool Valentine story and craft for children ages 3-5. Presidio Reading Center, 3150 Sacramento St., Thursday, Feb. 11, 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. respectively; 292-2155.

Lecture: Troy Duster, PhD, professor of sociology and director of the Institute for Social Change at UC Berkeley, will speak about "Genetic Testing, the Social Milieu, and the Leap from Genes to Behaviors" at UCSF Health Sciences West building, Room 301, 513 Parnassus Ave., Thursday, Feb. 11, noon; 502-2594.

Senior Citizens Dance: Maury Wolohan and his band will play at the 16th Annual Senior Citizens Valentines Dance on Friday, Feb. 12, 12:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. at the S.F. County Fair Building, Ninth Avenue and Lincoln Way. Free. Sponsored by S.F. Recreation and Park and S.F. Federal Savings and Loan Association. For more information, call 666-7015 or 292-2000.

15-21

Film Program: The Richmond Branch Library is showing a film program for children ages three to five consisting of "The Snowy Day," "It's Snow," "Charlie needs a Cloak," and "Changes, Changes." Richmond Branch Library, 351 Ninth Avenue, Tuesday, Feb. 16, 10:15 and 11 a.m. respectively; 666-7165.

Lecture: "Paths of India" will explain the yogas of Bhagavad Gita, the spiritual significance of Krishna, the double concepts of karma and rebirth, and relevance of two twentieth century Indian spiritual masters. Tuesday, Feb. 16, 7-9 p.m., Trustees Auditorium of Asian Art Museum, Golden Gate Park, $8 students and museum members/ $10 general; 753-6100 ext.241.

Lecture: "How to Be Rich on Your Income, Even if You're in Debt" with Eric K. Tyson, Stanford M.B.A., a S.F.-based financial lecturer, counselor, and writer for the S.F. Examiner, Parenting, and the New York Times on Tuesday, Feb. 16 at 6:30 p.m. Call 788-5500 for more information.

Forum: The Richmond District Democratic Club is sponsoring a forum for the discussion of neighborhood issues, with Captain Tom Suttmeier, SFPD, Richmond Police Station, 461 Sixth Avenue, on Thursday, Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m., free; 387-8616.

Presidio Tour: Tour the architecture of the historic buildings on the Presidio and see how the post has developed since 1776. Meet walk leader at the flagpole in front of the Officer's Club at the Main Post. Walk cancelled in the event of rain. Sunday, Feb. 21, 1-3 p.m.; 556-0865.

Babysitting Classes: Students in grades five to eight are invited to learn the basics of babysitting. Sunday, Feb. 21, 1-4 p.m., at Jewish Community Center, 3200 California St. Cost: Members $15, public $20. Pre-registration required. Call 346-6040 ext. 3041.

22-28

Lecture: Robert McDermott will speak in "Dawn of the West," about the Hebrews and Greeks, and their role in the foundation of Western thought and culture. Trustees' Auditorium of the Asian Art Museum in Golden Gate Park, Tuesday, Feb. 23, 7-9 p.m., $8 students and museum members/$10 general; 753-6100, ext.241.

Discussion: UCSF Foot and Ankle Clinic chief, Glenn B. Pfeffer, will discuss the diagnosis and management of common foot problems at "The Pain of De-Feet" in Room 300 of Health Sciences West Building, 513 Parnassus Ave., Wednesday, Feb. 24, noon to 1 p.m; 476-4394.

Community Meeting: UCSF/Mount Zion will hold a community meeting to discuss any public concerns, including construction plans at the UCSF/Mount Zion campus, Herbst Hall, 1600 Divisadero St., Wednesday, Feb. 24, 7 p.m.; 476-3206.

Ballroom Dancing Party: The Friday Nite Ballroom Dance will hold a Dance Party with a "Western Theme" at Golden Gate Park Senior Center, 37th Avenue and Fulton Street, Friday, Feb. 26, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Garage Sale: Amnesty International Richmond-Sunset Group #486 will hold their annual garage sale on Saturday, Feb. 27, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at 4500 Ulloa St. (at 46th Avenue).

Workshop: San Francisco State University is offering a Re-Entry Orientation Workshop for prospective undergraduate students who have been out of school for five years or more. The workshop will be given at San Francisco State on Saturday, Feb. 27, by the University's Advising Center. To obtain a registration form ($8), call 338-2103.

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Public Hospital

Continued from page 1

Army has come around to our position," Alexander said.

The Public Health Hospital is a central building, constructed in 1932, and two wings added later.

Levitt says the older building, along with seven houses the Army uses for officers' housing, may be "historically significant" and that the area, part of which contains sensitive native Bay Area vegetation, is an important watershed for the Lobos Creek.

"There are a number of natural and cultural values that need to be protected," Levitt said.

The main hospital building is empty, except for a part of one wing used by the Chinese American International School and an area being used by the S.F. Public Library to store books displaced by the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.

There are about seven other structures at the site, including a three-story building with columns around the front entrance. The building currently houses an office of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a U.S. Army dental research unit, a portion of the Presidio Department of Engineering and Housing and the Army's criminal investigation unit.

Another building, located behind the main hospital, is used by the "548 Exclusive Bomb Ordnance Unit."

Photo Philip Liborio Gang

The Public Health Hospital may soon join the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

There are also some areas that have been identified as having toxic contamination, and the Army has stated its responsibility and commitment to cleaning up the polluted areas.

The Army plans to vacate the base, making it a national park, by 1995.

Asian Gangs

Continued from page 1

Police Chief Anthony Ribera has issued a letter in English and Chinese that was distributed to merchants across a wide area of the City warning them of the crimes and asking merchants to report any suspicious solicitations immediately.

Dower said the crimes happen with greater frequency during Chinese New Year because many business owners have money on hand to give as New Year's good luck gifts.

"They're really vicious kids, many of them 15, 16 or 17 years old," said Dower. "They don't think twice about pulling the trigger or stabbing their victims."

He said gangs recruit them to commit the crimes because their youth status often prevents their being tried as adults, although some prosecutors have been successful in trying them as adults recently.

"One of the problems we have with these cases is that there is a lot of reluctance to report the crimes right away," Dower said.

He added the department has been successful in arresting key suspects in recent Asian-gang home-invasion robberies. "But we're still really playing catch-up" in the current cases, he said.

Taraval police captain Greg Winters said the crimes may be committed by young Asian males as an initiation rite into Asian gangs, such as the Wo Hop To.

Law enforcement officials say Asian gang activity in the Richmond and Sunset districts has been escalating rapidly in the last several years, especially since police have eroded the traditional foothold of such activity in Chinatown.

A special public meeting has been announced for March 19 at 3 p.m. at the Richmond Police Station at 461 Sixth Ave.

San Francisco Supervisor Tom Hsieh and SF Police Chief Anthony Ribera will lead the meeting, which will focus on Asian gang-related extortion.

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